

REMARKS

This amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed February 3, 2004 having a shortened statutory response period ending on May 3, 2004. This response is filed within the statutory response period. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 02-1818.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks below.

1. Status of the Claims

Claims 2-13 and 16-34 are presently pending in this application. Claim 1 has been canceled by this Amendment. The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3, 10 and 12 is noted with thanks and appreciation. Claims 10 and 12 have been rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter of claim 1. Claims 4-9, 12-13 and 16 have been rewritten to depend from claim 3 and are therefore allowable. Claims 17-24 depend from claim 10 and are therefore allowable. Claims 25-34 depend from claim 12 and are therefore allowable. Applicants submit that these amendments place the claims in condition for allowance and, thus, request that the amendments be entered.

2. Prior Art Rejections


Claims 1-2, 4-9, 11, 13 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,301,582 to Johnson et al. (*Johnson*). The amendments to the claims are believed to render this rejection moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-13 and 16-34 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request an early Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: May 3, 2004

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